



Dealing with Feelings of Loss and Stress Caused by COVID-19

Dr. Chetan Joshi, Director
Dr. Ted Pickett, Associate Director
Dr. David Petersen, Training Director
Dr. Yi-Jiun Lin, Assistant Director

University of Maryland Counseling Center

<http://counseling.umd.edu>

Who is in Attendance?

Poll 1

- My student is the first in our family to go to college.
- Many generations in my family have gone to college.

Who is in Attendance?

Poll 2

- We are a UMD legacy family, with multiple generations having studied at UMD.
- We are new to UMD and starting our journey as a Terp family.

Who is in Attendance?

Poll 3

- Caregivers of first year student?
- Caregivers of second year student?
- Caregivers of third year student?
- Caregivers of fourth year student?
- Caregivers of graduate student?

What Do You Hope to Gain from this Webinar?

Poll 4

- ❑ Understanding the process of grief and loss.
- ❑ Exploring the variety of ambiguous and anticipatory losses we are experiencing.
- ❑ Learning strategies for coping with the anxiety and stress of our current situation.
- ❑ Hearing suggestions for helping my student cope with the losses in their life.

Ambiguous Grief

When the grief that we experience lacks a point of focus on a specific, tangible loss, it can be described as ambiguous grief. For example:

- Loss of senior year
- Graduating students not being able to participate in commencement
- Prolonged disruption of interpersonal connections
- Loss of an offered position (e.g. internship) or difficulty securing a job
- Significant disruption of life; loss of usual routine

Anticipatory Grief

Grief about anticipated losses, which have not even come to pass as yet.

- Can arise when we are worried about a loved one who is ill.
- Also occurs when we know something bad is happening -- even when we can't see it, like a virus.
- We might ask ourselves, "What is going to happen?"
- The feeling of uncertainty is compounded by a loss of sense of safety.

The Flow of Grief

- **Denial:** This virus is not real, this virus will not affect us, it is the same as regular flu.
- **Anger:** How dare people ask me to stay home and restrict my activities? I am angry about all this social distancing nonsense.
- **Bargaining:** Okay, if I social distance for two weeks everything will be better, right?
- **Depression / Sadness:** I don't know when this will end, I cannot take this any more.
- **Acceptance:** This is happening; I have to figure out how to proceed.
- **Meaning Making:** Why did this happen to us?

How Do People Grieve?

Intuitive grievers

- Focus on feelings and affect

Instrumental grievers

- Action, problem-solving and cognitions

Blended grievers

- Do both

Dissonant grievers

- Internal experiences do not match external expressions



What Type of A Griever Are You?

Poll 5

- Intuitive Griever
- Instrumental Griever
- Blended Griever
- Dissonant Griever

Common Reactions to Grief

Feelings/Emotions: Anger, irritability, sadness, depression, guilt, anxiety, shock, helplessness, numbing, loneliness.


Physical Reactions: Low energy, headaches, muscle weakness, hollowness in stomach, nausea, shaking, trembling, shortness of breath.

Thought Reactions: Confusion, disbelief, obsessive thoughts, forgetfulness, preoccupation.

Behavioral Reactions: Problems with eating and sleeping, social withdrawal, absent-mindedness, dreams/nightmares, crying.

Coping with Grief and Stress

- ❑ Physical self care.
- ❑ Emotional self care.
- ❑ Express your feelings.
- ❑ Seek support.
- ❑ Participate.
- ❑ Consider seeking professional help.

"Grief is **NOT** a disorder,
a disease or sign of weakness.
It is an emotional, physical and spiritual
necessity, the price you pay
for love. 
The only cure for grief is to
grieve" -- Earl Grollman

How to Support Others

- ❑ Talk openly about what has been lost and the associated feelings.
- ❑ Be available. Your presence in their lives is important.
- ❑ Take some actions.
- ❑ Encourage the person of concern to take care of themselves physically, emotionally, and socially -- and to ask for help, if appropriate.
- ❑ Accept your own limitations.

Helping Your Student

Name and normalize students' reactions to loss resulting from the COVID-9 crisis, including anxiety, uncertainty and sadness.

Parents and other caregivers can suggest a number of ways to reduce stress:

- Practice self-care: keeps your immune system strong and your emotional reserves full.
- Have realistic expectations.



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TO FLOURISH

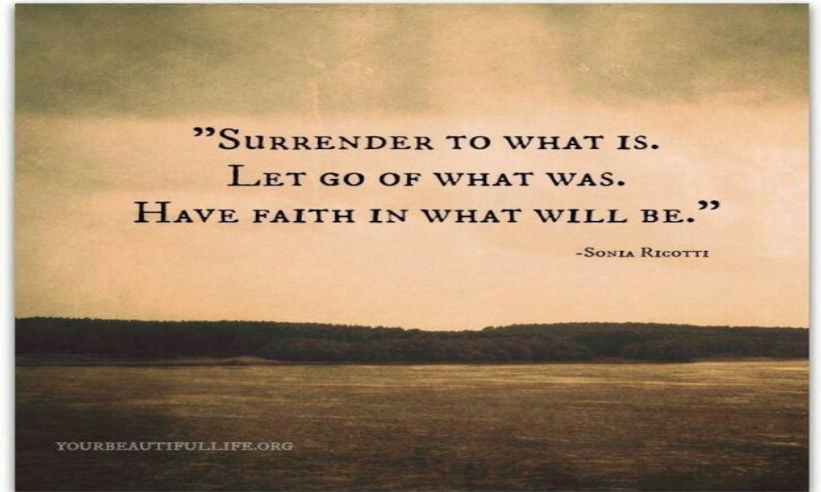
Helping Your Student

- Establish a routine.
- Seek out social support.
- Check in with others.
- Find ways to manage disappointment.



Helping Your Student

- ❑ Limit your media consumption.
- ❑ Let go of things that you can't control.



References

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- <https://giveanhour.org/covid-providers/>
- Grief presentation to the UMD Counseling Center by Dr. Karen O'Brien in Nov 2019



University Counseling Center
University of Maryland, College Park
301.314.7651
counseling.umd.edu

Office of Parent and Family Affairs
University of Maryland, College Park
301.314.8429
terpfamily@umd.edu